

# FOCUS

*The Quarterly Newsletter for Physician Office Staff*

*Volume 5, Number 1  
February, 1996*

## **Site & Facilities Update**

### **Emergency Department Project**

Phase I of the Emergency Department project has been completed and inspected. This phase included the building of nine beds in the space previously occupied by Emergency Department and Trauma Administration.

These beds will accommodate patients previously seen in the holding area and medical bay 1 and 2. The new area has cardiac monitors, a dictation area, x-ray view boxes, and an equipment and supply area.

Phase II of the construction began on January 15 and is expected to be completed by March 22. The areas affected are the holding area, staff lounge, medication room, and the former Medical Staff Lounge. These areas will be inaccessible. Entrance and egress maps will be posted by the Facilities and Construction Department.

Your patience and cooperation during the construction period is appreciated.

### **Parking**

Parking continues to be a massive operation at Cedar Crest & I-78. With approximately 2,700 parking spaces available, on any given weekday, between

6,000 and 10,000 cars park at the hospital at some time during the day. That's more than most malls park in a day!

Although, at times, spaces can be difficult to find, according to E. Gerald Kresge, Director of Security, "We clearly already exceed the number of parking spaces both by zoning and by usage. Spaces are available; we just need to make it easier for patients and visitors to find them."

Several issues are being looked at in response to this ongoing demand. New directional signs will be installed to assist patients and visitors to get to where they want to go easier. Traffic flow has also been improved and continues to be studied on a daily basis.

In addition, in light of the overwhelming success of the valet parking program at 17th & Chew, a pilot valet parking program began at Cedar Crest & I-78 in December. For the convenience of patients, there are two drop-off sites: the main hospital entrance and the entrance to the John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center. The cost of the program will be partially offset by a nominal \$2.00 per car fee. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with no holiday coverage. Physician practices in the 1210, 1230, and 1240 buildings who wish to absorb the cost for their patients may do

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so by acquiring validation stickers from the hospital cashier's office. The stickers are to be affixed to the valet ticket stub.

Although a number of issues are being looked at to improve the parking demand, construction and construction vehicles tend to disrupt the parking situation even further. Nevertheless, construction is ongoing and will continue to be for some time. As soon as the weather breaks, you will start to see more changes to the south of the hospital building. Effected areas will include the helipad, Emergency Room parking, MRI parking, middle shift parking, and physician parking. However, please be sure that you will be informed well in advance of any changes.

If you have any questions regarding parking or the Valet Parking Program, please contact E. Gerald Kresge at 402-8220.



### **New Traffic Pattern Deserves Attention**

Please be aware that a new stop sign has been added on the Cedar Crest & I-78 campus.

The new stop sign is at the rear of the campus at the intersection of the new access road and the road that runs between the main hospital and the engineering building. The stop applies only to traffic exiting the hospital on the road that runs between the two buildings.

Traffic on the new access road does not have a stop sign.

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## ***Outpatient Process for Patients with Ports/Access Devices***

For patient convenience and to expedite services provided to them, a new process has been initiated for outpatients with access devices (Hickman catheters, subcutaneous ports) who require outpatient laboratory services at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78.

In order to expedite the patient's laboratory experience, the physician's office is requested to call **402-0539** to register the patient for bloodwork and state that the patient has a PORT/VENOUS ACCESS. The patient will be given an appointment and parking instructions. The patient should then report to the information desk in the John & Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center. From there, they will be directed to the MultiPurpose Area where they will have their bloodwork drawn.

Also, when a patient with a PORT/VENOUS DEVICE needs to be scheduled for diagnostic testing, i.e., CAT Scan, the physician's office should call the outpatient diagnostic testing area in advance in order to minimize patient inconvenience and length of visit.

### **Shower of Savings**

There will be a Vendor Fair for members of the Lehigh Valley PHO and their office managers on Tuesday, March 26, from 4 to 9 p.m., in Classrooms 1, 2 and 3 at Cedar Crest & I-78. Invitations will be mailed within the next few weeks. Stay tuned!



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## ***PennCARE Update***

In November, 1995, North Penn Hospital, Lansdale, and its medical staff joined the PennCARE integrated delivery system, a network of hospitals, physicians, and other providers offering a full range of prevention and treatment services to businesses in eastern Pennsylvania.

The addition of North Penn Hospital to PennCARE brings the number of participating hospitals to eight, with combined medical staffs of 2,230 physicians. More than two million residents live in the counties served by PennCARE – an area measuring more than 3,800 square miles.

North Penn Hospital's partners in PennCARE include the following hospitals and their medical staffs: Doylestown Hospital, Doylestown; Gnaden Huetten Memorial Hospital, Lehigh; Grand View Hospital, Sellersville; Hazleton General Hospital and Hazleton-St. Joseph Medical Center in Hazleton; Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown; and Muhlenberg Hospital Center, Bethlehem. Penn State University's Hershey Medical Center will participate through a contract for highly specialized medical services.

The PennCARE network, introduced last May, does not involve the merger of assets; each hospital remains independent and has an equity interest in the network. The partners have agreed to participate in mutual contracting, consistent medical management and single data collection to measure and improve health outcomes of individuals covered under its health plan.

### **Medical Staff Reappointment**

In compliance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Medical Staff and Hospital Bylaws, and the standards of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, each member of the hospital's Medical Staff must be reappointed a minimum of once every two years.

On March 2, this year's reappointment process will be put into motion when the Reappointment Packets will be mailed to almost 700 members of the Medical Staff. Each packet will contain a 5-page **Application for Reappointment to the Medical Staff**, a copy of the addressee's **current privilege sheet**, an **insurance information sheet**, a **self-addressed return envelope**, and to simplify the process, a **Checklist** has been included to assist in completing the information.

Although much of the information on the application is preprinted, it is of paramount importance that the physicians review all the information, make changes where necessary, and complete any missing data. Before returning the application, please assist your physician(s) by taking a moment to review the Checklist and make sure all the information is complete and all the required documents have been attached to the application. If you have any questions regarding the reappointment process, please contact Eileen Hildenbrandt in Medical Staff Services at 402-9852.

The Reappointment Process is a monumental task for everyone involved; however, with your assistance, it can become much more manageable. **THANK YOU** for your anticipated assistance with the upcoming Reappointment Process.



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## ***New Document Management Prime Vendor Selected***

Effective January 25, all pic and pac requisitions (MM-35) will be processed by Consolidated Graphic Communications (CGC), the hospital's new document management prime vendor. All physician offices who order forms through the Pic 'N Pac program, should continue to send the requisitions to the Purchasing Department. However, please remember to complete the requisition with the requested information, such as the Cost Center (907 - Medical Staff Services), the name of

a contact in the physician's office, and the phone number for the contact person.

If you have any questions regarding deliveries, out of stocks, etc., please contact Paul Fodness, the CGC representative who is responsible for all forms, at (717) 275-1510. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the hospital's Pic 'N Pac program, please contact Sue Toth in Purchasing at 402-8374.

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## ***Before You Sign -- Get the Facts!***

Almost on a weekly basis, a physician's office may receive a new managed care contract to review and sign. BEWARE! Before your physicians sign on the dotted line, make sure you have all the facts and know what each one means.

Your first step should be to contact your business advisor or legal counsel who can give you advice and negotiation assistance. In addition, the Lehigh Valley PHO may also be able to answer questions and offer support. For more information, contact Krista Miller, Contract Coordinator, at 402-7440.

A number of articles and guidelines have been published to offer you help in evaluating a plan before signing up. Some of these sources include The Physician's Advisory, the Conomikes Reports -- Guidelines for Reviewing a Managed Care Contract, and the Managed Care Handbook, to name a few.

So remember, before your physicians sign, get the facts!!

### **WHO'S NEW**

**Laurie Kline, Office Manager**  
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Fairgrounds Medical Center  
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## ***The Dynamic Role of Infection Control Practitioners***

Infection Control programs were developed in hospitals during the 1960's in response to a recommendation made by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) that hospitals appoint Infection Control committees. The main focus of the early programs was to aid in the prevention and control of nosocomial (hospital acquired) infections. Today, the roles of Infection Control Practitioners have expanded dramatically to include not only hospital surveillance but also occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens, medical waste management, control and management of communicable diseases within the community and hospital for patients, staff members, and visitors, needlestick/occupational exposure prevention, as well as educational and consultative services.

The Infection Control Practitioners at Lehigh Valley Hospital have the task to research practices and recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and to enforce standards mandated by OSHA to insure the hospital is in compliance for accreditation. Countless hours are spent reviewing current literature related to infection control practices. As a result, the Infection Control Department prides itself in being well informed and knowledgeable in all aspects of infection control.

As the healthcare industry continues its trend toward increasing the delivery of healthcare to outpatient point of services, many infection control issues have shifted to this sector. As patients are spending fewer days in the hospital, their post-discharge care is followed more closely in community healthcare settings. Post-operative infections and the manifestation of other infections acquired during the patient's hospitalization such as MRSA

(methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) and CDIFF (*Clostridium difficile* toxin) are increasingly being diagnosed and managed on an outpatient basis.

One of the goals of the Infection Control Department at Lehigh Valley Hospital is to strengthen our alliance with providers of outpatient services for case reporting so that we may continue to provide relevant and useful information concerning nosocomial infections within the hospital and communicable diseases within our community. We would also like to be recognized as an excellent resource for current infection control practices aimed at minimizing the spread of potentially communicable/infectious diseases.

The Infection Control Department has developed a series of consultative services to cover a wide variety of needs. Activities offered through these services include:

- Evaluation of standard infection control practices
  - Review of Infection Control Office Procedures
  - Selection/use of cleaning products
  - Universal Precautions
  - Sharps and waste management
  - Managing exposures to blood/body fluids
- Recommendations for program improvements
- Evaluation or development of exposure control plans
- Provision of training programs
  - OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogen Standard
  - Training for HIV Antibody Pre- and Post-Test Counseling
  - Tuberculosis - disease, management and prevention

For more information regarding these services or any Infection Control issues, please call the Infection Control Department at 402-0680.



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## ***Xact Medicare Services***

### **Educational Programs Available**

As you may know, Xact Medicare Services is the Medicare Part B carrier for the state of Pennsylvania. Through the department of Xact Medicare Professional Services, educational programs about the program are provided to all types of providers (excluding durable medical equipment suppliers which is now handled by a regional carrier).

In conjunction with local hospitals, Lehigh County Medical Society has scheduled the following free educational programs:

Sacred Heart Hospital - February 20,  
June 18, and October 15  
Lehigh Valley Hospital - April 16,  
August 20, and December 17

Reservations should be made by calling Lehigh County Medical Society at 437-2288.

### **Correct Usage of TAP**

Xact Medicare Services offers the Telephone Appeals Program (TAP) which provides a faster, more efficient process for Medicare providers to request a telephone appeal of their claim. The problem is that TAP is being over utilized by some provider offices.

Xact found that the percentage of claims being reviewed versus the number of claims processed is higher

than the national average. That fact is very concerning since it is about seven times more expensive to process a review claim than to pay a "clean" claim the first time it is handled. When Xact analyzed why the review volume was so high, they found the misuse of TAP to be a culprit.

Some provider offices use TAP several times a day or dozens of times a month to fix *the same recurring problem*. For example, a physician practice may have a problem whereby their software does not transmit the rendering physician number or perhaps a required UPIN number on their claims. Instead of having this simple, straightforward problem fixed by their software vendor, they will rely on the TAP line to make the adjustments to each and every claim. Also, calls of a general nature are best handled by the Provider Services line at **(717) 763-5700**. The Provider Services representatives are better trained to assist physician offices with their questions. Directing general inquiries to the TAP line detracts from the service that they are to provide which is claim appeal requests.

The Health Care Financing Administration will only support the TAP line for Medicare carriers as long as it is cost-effective. So please, do not use the TAP line to resolve recurring claim problems which should be corrected prior to submission. Your assistance in the appropriate use of the Medicare TAP line will assure that this valuable service is here to stay.

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## **WomanCare Health Forum**

**Maternal/Child Health, Fitness and Safety. How to Help Your Patients**, will be held on Thursday, February 15, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., in Room 916 of the School of Nursing at 17th & Chew Streets.

Following a complimentary lunch from 11:30 a.m. to noon, the program will include the following topics:

**The Fifth Vital Sign** - This program will offer you a step-by-step guide to help your patients stop smoking. A team approach will offer ways to integrate brief tobacco use intervention into a daily schedule without disrupting your busy schedule.

**Maternity Fitness Program** - Obtain the latest information and current research regarding exercise during pregnancy and the post-partum period, including the psychosocial benefits to the participants.

**Infant/Child Safety** - Learn how to incorporate safety prevention activities into your daily interactions with your patients before the need for CPR. A slide presentation, safety tips, and additional resources will be included.

The program will benefit physician office staff (particularly OB/GYN, Family Practice, and Pediatrics), health professionals, and educators.

For more information or to register, please call WomanCare at 402-2903.

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## **Upcoming Seminars and Educational Programs**

**CPT Coding Including all 1996 CPT Changes** will be held on Thursday, February 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Ramada Inn Airport, 76 Industrial Highway, Essington, Pa. \$189.00 per person. Coding and billing is perhaps the most frustrating and challenging aspect for hospitals, physician offices, and ASCs. In this comprehensive seminar, the instructor will guide participants through all sections of the CPT manual through the 1996 CPT coding changes. For more information, call Business Network at 1-800-889-2688.

**Front Office Focus: Streamlining for Managed Care** will be held on Thursday, February 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Sheraton Inn Jetport, 3400 Airport Road, Allentown. \$185.00 per person. One of the nation's leading medical practice consultants and trainers will give you hands-on approaches for dealing with

the challenges caused by managed care in your world today! For more information, call the Medical Management Institute at 1-800-334-5724.

**Handling Employee Discipline & Performance Mistakes** will be held on Friday, February 23, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Allentown Hilton, 904 Hamilton Mall, Allentown. \$59.00 per person. Some of the topics to be presented include: "The New 'Non-Punitive/Corrective Action' Plan for Handling Employee Problems," "The Supervisor's Role," "How to Manage Behavior In the Workplace," "How to Confront Unacceptable Behavior," and more! For more information, call Seminars International at 1-800-843-8084.

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**How to Lead a Team** will be held on Monday, February 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Comfort Suites University, 120 W. Third Street, Bethlehem. \$99.00 per person. Some of the critical skills you'll learn include getting off on the right foot with a new team, making sure team meetings are worthwhile, and not just time-wasting get-togethers, understanding the leader's role when conflicts erupt or there's infighting on your team, and keeping your team members focused and enthused, especially in the early stages when everything is confusing. For more information, call CareerTrack Seminars at 1-800-334-6780.

The Lehigh Valley Health Information Association is sponsoring a **CPT Coding/ Managed Care Seminar** on Thursday, February 29, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, at the Phoebe Home, 1925 Turner Street, Allentown. \$10.00 per person. If you have questions about outpatient coding; if you are unsure about managed care; if you find yourself confused about preregistering patients for outpatient surgery; or if you are unsure about which forms need to be completed for BC/BS prior to the patient arriving at the hospital, this forum is for you. For more information, contact Claire Kukielka at (610) 794-5280.

**Insurance Billing & Collection in Pennsylvania** will be held on Tuesday, March 5, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Bethlehem, U.S. Route 22 & 512, Bethlehem. This seminar will review the 1996 codes and how to use them, effective Medicare, Medicaid, WC, and commercial strategies, verification techniques, reducing payment delays, and understanding managed care reimbursement in Pennsylvania. For more information, call the Business Network at 1-800-889-2688.

#### POMA News

The meeting schedule of the Physician Office Manager's Association (POMA) for the next few months include:

**Thursday, March 7,**  
8 a.m., Muhlenberg  
Hospital Center

**Tuesday, April 2,**  
8 a.m., St. Luke's  
Hospital

**Thursday, May 2,**  
8 a.m., Muhlenberg  
Hospital Center

**Tuesday, June 4,**  
8 a.m., St. Luke's  
Hospital

Officers for the term  
ending June 30  
include:

**Darlene Nemeth,**  
President - for  
January, February  
and March  
**Josie Sabella,**  
President - for April,  
May and June  
**Sonya Bujcs,**  
Secretary  
**Rosanne Kocher,**  
Treasurer

For more information  
about POMA, please  
contact Darlene  
Nemeth at 868-1014.

#### PAHCOM News

The next meeting of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of Professional Healthcare Office Managers (PAHCOM) will be held on Tuesday, February 20, at 6 p.m., at the Spice of Life Restaurant, 1259 S. Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown. This will be a networking session on personnel issues and policy manual development. For more information, contact Rosanne Kocher at 966-4646.

Congratulations to the newly elected Executive Committee:

**Rosanne Kocher, President** (Macungie Medical Group)  
**Sarah Donlevy, CMM, President-elect** (Drs. Cassel, Snyder & Paranicas)  
**Mimi Morrison, Secretary** (Lehigh Valley Pain Management)  
**Jane Derby, Treasurer** (Wescosville OB-GYN)  
**Bonnie Miller, CMM, Membership Director** (Panebianco-Yip Heart Surgeons)  
**Colleen Burgess, CMM, PAHCOM National Local Representative** (Allen Neurosurgical)

In addition, the Lehigh Valley Chapter of PAHCOM will be sponsoring a seminar for office staff and office managers on Tuesday, April 9.

Diane Palmer, MBA, a well-known speaker, consultant, and author, with more than 20 years of experience in the healthcare field, will be presenting a morning session for office staff on "Patient Satisfaction" and "Developing a Top-Notch Phone Personality." The afternoon session is geared toward office managers and will address "Successfully Dealing with Work Change," "Dealing Effectively With Complaints and Complainers," and "How's, When's & Why's of Conducting Job Performance Appraisals."

Information will be sent in the near future. Seating is limited for both sessions. To make your reservations now, please contact Joan Rissmiller at 439-4055. PAHCOM members will receive a \$15 discount.







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**LEHIGH VALLEY**  
HOSPITAL

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